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* MEDDAC
Memorandum 40-22

Medical Services Interpreter Guidelines

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JEROME PENNER III
LTC, MS
Deputy Commander for Administration

Official:



JOHN SCHNEIDER
Adjutant

History. This update publishes the fifth revision of the publication, which was originally published on 9 September 1992.

Summary. This memorandum covers policy and procedures for identifying staff interpreters and for utilizing them in conjunction with patient whenever necessary; it also provides guidance to personnel of Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center (KACC) on the proper procedures to follow when patients are in need of interpreters. This updated revises the format of publication substantially and published it in electronic medium only for the first time.

Applicability. This memorandum applies to Headquarters, U.S. Army Medical Department Activity, Fort George G. Meade (MEDDAC) (i.e., KACC).

Proponent. The proponent of this memorandum is the Clinical Administrator.

Suggested improvements. Users of this publication are invited to send comments and suggested improvements, by memorandum, directly to the Commander, U.S. Army Medical Department Activity, ATTN: MCXR-CA, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-5800, or to the MEDDAC's Command Editor by fax to (301) 677-8088 or e-mail to John.Schneider@amedd.army.mil.

Distribution. Distribution of this publication by electronic medium only.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1-1. Purpose

This memorandum prescribes responsibilities, policies, and procedures for establishing and maintaining a current list of qualified interpreters in foreign and sign languages. It also prescribes procedures for KACC staff to follow when communicating with patients, family members, and significant others whose primary language is other than spoken English.

1-2. References

Related publications are listed in appendix A.

1-3. Explanation of abbreviations and special terms

Abbreviations and special terms used in this publication are explained in the glossary.

1-4. Responsibilities

a. *The Clinical Administrator.* The Clinical Administrator will—

(1) Identify personnel on KACC's staff, and from other sources, who desire to be volunteer interpreters.

(2) Establish agreements with military school activities on the installation to ensure that non-English speaking students who utilize KACC for medical purposes are accompanied by other persons who can translate for them.

(3) Maintain a current list of volunteer interpreters.

(4) Provide a copy of the current list of volunteer interpreters to—

(a) All clinical areas

(b) The Chief, Patient Administration Division (PAD).

(c) The Medical Company First Sergeant.

(5) Include the subject of this publication in KACC's Newcomer's Briefings and Birth-month Annual Training (BAT).

b. *Chiefs of all clinical and administrative areas.* Chiefs of all clinical and administrative areas will maintain a copy of the current Interpreters List in their work areas and ensure all personnel on their staffs know where it is.

c. *The Chief, PAD.* The Chief, PAD will—

(1) Distribute a copy of each current Interpreters List to all PAD activities.

(2) Provide a printed copy of this publication, and a copy of each current Interpreters list to the KACC Red Cross Chairperson, for the use of Red Cross volunteers at the Information Desk.

d. *The First Sergeant.* The First Sergeant will ensure that the current Interpreters List is posted in the Staff Duty Instructions.

e. *Volunteer Interpreters.* Volunteer interpreters will inform the Clinical Administrator (301-677-8958) if they become temporarily or permanently ineligible as interpreters. For example—

(1) Temporary duty (TDY) of 30 days or more would constitute temporary removal.

(2) Permanent change of station (PCS) or personal reasons would constitute permanent removal.

f. *The individual on duty at the Information Desk.* The individual on duty at the Information Desk, whether it be a member of the staff or a Red Cross volunteer, if requested to do so, will make an announcement for an interpreter over the public address (PA) system if an interpreter is not

available from the Interpreter's List.

g. *All KACC clinical and administrative personnel.* All KACC clinical and administrative personnel will—

(1) Be familiar with the procedure for accessing this publication on the MEDDAC's website, or the location of the printed copy if a copy has been printed from the website for use within the clinic or administrative area.

(2) Know the procedure of obtaining interpreter service.

1-5. Use of the pronouns he, his, him and himself

These pronouns include she, hers, her and herself.

Chapter 2

Maintaining the Interpreters List

2-1. General

The interpreters list will be created and updated by the Clinical Administrator.

2-2. Description of the Interpreters List

a. The Interpreters List will consist of two parts—

(1) Part I – Spoken Language Interpreters.

(2) Part II – Sign Language Interpreters.

b. The following information will be included for each volunteer interpreter listed:

(1) Title (Military grade, Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.).

(2) Name (First and last).

(3) Language(s) spoken and or sign language(s).

(4) Source. (Identity of the KACC duty section; other organization or activity on Fort Meade; or a member of the Fort Meade Community, such as a military spouse not employed by Fort Meade.)

(5) Duty phone number(s), if applicable.

2-3. Identifying volunteers

The Clinical Administrator will seek volunteer interpreters by the following means:

a. *KACC staff.*

(1) At monthly Newcomers Orientations and BAT.

(2) Flyers. A flyer announcing the need for volunteers will be distributed within the facility semi-annually, if necessary.

b. *Other than KACC staff.* When deemed necessary by the Clinical Administrator, he will—

(1) Contact other organizations and activities on Fort Meade to solicit the assistance of their personnel as volunteer interpreters.

(2) Place an article in *Soundoff!* to announce KACC's need for volunteer interpreters. Such announcements will be specifically targeted at family members of military personnel living on or adjacent to Fort Meade, to retired military personnel and their family members, and to survivors of former active duty and retired military personnel. These articles will be submitted through the KACC Public Affairs Officer.

2-4. Removing names of KACC volunteers from the Interpreters List

a. The names of volunteer interpreters will be removed from the Interpreters List for any of the following, or similar, reasons:

- (1) PCS. (Permanent removal.)
- (2) TDY of 30 days or more. (Temporary removal.)
- (3) Hospitalization and or convalescent leave of 30 days or more. (Temporary removal.)
- (4) Absent without leave, desertion, or in confinement by military or civilian authorities.

(Temporary or permanent removal at the discretion of the Clinical Administrator.)

(5) At the request of the individual. (Temporary or permanent removal at the request of the individual. The individual will not be asked why he is withdrawing his or her services; however, he may divulge this information if he wishes to.)

2-5. Removing names of other volunteers from the Interpreters List

Quarterly, the Clinical Administrator will contact non-KACC volunteer interpreters to confirm that they are still available to serve as interpreters.

a. If a military volunteer cannot be contacted directly, his/her organization or activity will be contacted to determine his status.

b. If contact cannot be established with a family member, retiree or survivor volunteer, he will be removed from the Interpreters List. If a person is removed from the list due to inability to make contact with him, the Clinical Administrator will make periodic attempts to contact that person until contact is made or being satisfied that further attempts to contact the person would be futile.

2-6. Areas where the Interpreters List and a printed copy of this publication will be maintained

a. A current copy of the Interpreters List, and a copy of this publication, printed from the MEDDAC's website, will be available in all areas within KACC to include the Staff Duty Instruction Book.

b. The Clinical Administrator will ensure a copy of each updated Interpreters List is available on the intranet under *Clinical Services, Clinical Support*.

2-7. Inspections

Quarterly, the Clinical Administrator will conduct an unannounced inspection of each area where the Interpreters List is maintained. The purpose of this inspection is to ensure that—

- a. The current copy of the Interpreters List is available at the specified location.
- b. A copy of the current version of this publication is collocated with the Interpreters List.
- c. Personnel assigned to the work area know how to access the Interpreters List and this publication, and that they know the procedure for obtaining the support of other, professional, translator services that are available.

Chapter 3

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)

3-1. Description of TDD

a. A TDD is an instrument that enables hearing impaired people to communicate by telephone. It includes a keyboard for typing messages to be transmitted and a display panel that

displays received messages.

b. All TDD within KACC are portable units that can be attached to any phone jack. The TTD assumes the phone number of the jack into which it is plugged.

3-2. Locations of TDD

A TDD unit is available in the primary care lobby next to the pharmacy.

3-3. Availability of TDD

a. The Clinical Administrator will ensure the TDD unit is always available for use by patients, their families, and significant others, and that staff are familiar with its location and operation.

b. TDD units are highly pilferable items; therefore, as much as possible, the unit will be secured to prevent theft.

Chapter 4

Assisting People Who Require Interpreter Service

4-1. Initial communicative attempts

Clinical and administrative staff who interact with a patient, or a patient's family member or significant other who cannot communicate effectively in English will adhere to the following procedure:

a. Attempt to communicate with resources available within the immediate area. This includes the use of language boards, communications cards, and the enlistment of services of other patients or personnel who happen to be present.

b. Obtain the name and phone number(s) of one or more interpreters from the Interpreters List, available on the intranet.

4-2. Contacting volunteers

The KACC activity that requires the services of an interpreter will contact the interpreter to request his services. The nature of the circumstances will be explained to the interpreter. If the interpreter is not able to come to the location where the assistance is required, the assistance will be provided by telephone if both the person requiring the assistance and the interpreter agree to this. If a speaker-phone is being used, the speaker should be utilized if privacy will not be compromised by doing so.

4-3. What to do when a volunteer is not available from the list

During duty hours, if there is no interpreter available from the Interpreters List for the required spoken or sign language, perform the following steps until the information is obtained:

a. Obtain the name of an interpreter from the KACC Interpreter List.

b. Contact the Information Desk (78741) and ask the person on duty there to announce the need for an interpreter over the PA system.

(1) *Spoken languages*. The announcement for a spoken language interpreter should be made as follows: "Attention in the facility . . . attention in the facility. If there is anyone in the facility who can speak (language), please contact (name of activity) by calling (phone number)." Repeat the message one time.

(2) *Sign language*. The announcement for a sign language interpreter should be made as follows: "Attention in the facility . . . attention in the facility. If there is anyone in the facility who

can converse in sign language, please contact (name of activity) by calling (phone number).” Repeat the message one time.

c. Consult KACC’s intranet for the process to access professional voice and sign translation services. (See paragraph 2-6b, above.)

d. Contact the Clinical Administrator at 78261 or 78958 for assistance.

4-4. Offering the use of the TDD unit

When a hearing impaired person requires the use of a TDD to communicate with someone outside the facility, that person will be given access to the TDD unit, which is located in the primary care lobby next to the pharmacy.

4-5. Foreign students and their family members

a. The Clinical Administrator has established agreements with all service schools on the installation that have foreign students to ensure the following:

(1) That their non-English speaking foreign students who require medical assistance at KACC are accompanied to KACC by someone who can translate between the student’s language and English; i.e., another student, a school cadre, a family member or a friend.

(2) That non-English speaking family members of foreign students who require medical assistance at KACC are accompanied to KACC by someone who can translate between the family member’s language and English; i.e., the student (sponsor), another family member, another student, a school cadre or a friend.

b. If a non-English speaking foreign student, or a non-English speaking family member of a foreign student, arrives at KACC for medical assistance without an interpreter, the activity involved will follow the procedure outlined in paragraph 4-3, above, to obtain an interpreter.

c. If a translator is needed and the activity is unable to obtain the services of one, the activity will contact the school and the school will be asked to provide someone to translate as soon as possible.

d. Whenever a non-English speaking student, or non-English speaking family member of a foreign student, reports for medical care without an interpreter, the KACC activity involved will report this to the Clinical Administrator not later than close of business the next duty day. The Clinical Administrator will, in turn, contact the school, report the incident, and summarize the action that was taken by the staff to assist the patient.

Appendix A References

Section I Required Publications

This section contains no entries.

Section II Related Publications

AR 310-50

Authorized Abbreviations, Brevity Codes, and
Acronyms

Section III Prescribed Forms

This section contains no entries.

Section IV Referenced Forms

This section contains no entries.

Glossary

Section I Abbreviations

BAT

birthmonth annual training

KACC

Kimbrough Ambulatory Care
Center

MEDDAC

United States Army Medical

Department Activity, Fort
George G. Meade

PAD

Patient Administration
Division

PA

public address

TDD

Telecommunications Device

for the Deaf

TDY

temporary duty

Section II Terms

This section contains no
entries.